

high school students led the nation in Advanced Placement scores. With a few exceptions we have good schools in the 8th District, and I don't want to force parents, school boards, and teachers into a one-size fits all approach that might work in New York City or Atlanta but not in Barrington or Wauconda.

One of the reasons I supported broad-based tax relief, including eliminating the marriage tax penalty and doubling the child tax credit, is because it lets 70,000 married couples and families with 125,000 children in the 8th District of Illinois keep \$162 million per year in their pockets. That is \$162 million per year that families could spend in our district on education if they chose to do so.

Former President Ronald Reagan, in a March 12, 1983 radio address to the nation on education, said, "Better education doesn't mean a bigger Department of Education. In fact, that Department should be abolished. Instead, we must do a better job teaching the basics, insisting on discipline and results, encouraging competition and, above all, remembering that education does not begin with Washington officials or even State and local officials. It begins in the home, where it is the right and responsibility of every American."

When we send a dollar to the federal government from Illinois, we only get 75 cents back. In my district, we send more than \$2 to Washington and only get \$1 back. With a return like this, it is easy to see why I support letting taxpayers keep more of their hard-earned money and having parents decide locally how their money should be spent on education.

Federal education funding is at an all-time high, and H.R. 1 increases it by a huge amount. Yet, student achievement continues to lag. Most Republicans in Congress want to give local schools more freedom to use new models to solve old problems while maintaining high accountability standards. I am saddened that H.R. 1 does not accomplish this worthy goal.

One concept that has strong support from parents is President Bush's proposal to improve public education by testing children in reading and math in grades three through eight once each year. Under President Bush's proposal, schools would be held accountable for either improving scores or losing their federal money, which accounts for seven cents of every education dollar.

I fully support this provision and am gratified it has been included in the conference report before us today. In fact, during debate on H.R. 1 in May of this year, I voted against the amendment co-sponsored by Congressmen PETER HOEKSTRA and BARNEY FRANK to remove President Bush's test requirement from the bill. The tough new testing regimen designed to identify failing public schools—an idea at the heart of President Bush's education plan—survived when the amendment failed. But the rest of the President's plan to give local schools more control to make the changes necessary to improve and to give parents the option to move their children to a better private school were stripped out of the bill.

For the reasons I have outlined, I have decided to vote against H.R. 1. Again, I want to praise President Bush for his leadership in

proposing creative solutions to improving the education of our children. I encourage him to continue to move the federal government out of the way and to give schools more flexibility and parents more choices for their children.

TRIBUTE TO THE STUDENTS AND STAFF OF BECKEMEYER GRADE SCHOOL, HILLSBORO, ILLINOIS

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the students and staff of Beckemeyer Grade School in Hillsboro, Illinois, and the heartwarming project they undertook to bring comfort to the victims of the recent tragedies.

The attacks of September 11th were a horrible shock to everyone in the United States, but to none were they more devastating than to the victims and their families. American hearts went out to those who would now have to struggle on without the light and laughter of their loved ones who had died. The outpouring of support for these families was enormous, like a bright light of kindness that shone out through the darkness of the disaster. Money, well-wishes and prayers poured in from all across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, the students and staff of Beckemeyer Grade School were part of that outpouring. They purchased several thousand small, glass figurines, called Comfort Angels. These beautiful angels were meant to bring hope and well-wishes to all who viewed them. The people of Hillsboro, lead by their coordinator Pamela Hopper, then set an ambitious goal: to distribute an angel to the families of every victim of the tragedy.

They have come astonishingly close to that goal—thousands of Comfort Angels have been distributed to families all over the world. They have found their way to embassies, fire stations, Congressional offices, and homes in New York and Washington. Two thousand of them were distributed by the Salvation Army alone, at the Memorial for the Pentagon on October 11th. And the results have been equally amazing. Letters have poured into Hillsboro, filled with thanks and touching stories.

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the terrorists of September wished to divide and demoralize our country. Instead, in many ways they have energized us and brought us closer together. The amazing success of the people of Beckemeyer Grade School is a wonderful example of this—their faith and hard work has allowed them to make a difference in many lives, and they deserve my thanks and the thanks of these chambers.

COMMENDING THE CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY HOLIDAY TRAIN

HON. JERROLD NADLER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, this year, the Canadian Pacific Railway Holiday Train embarked on its third annual "journey of goodwill" to collect food throughout Canada and the United States for those most in need. The two previous drives have collected 18 tons of food, and have raised more than \$500,000 to combat hunger. On December 4th, one of the three trains traveling throughout the United States and Canada embarked on its journey from the Fresh Pond Junction Rail Yard in Queens, New York. There, the Canadian Pacific Railway hosted a special ceremony honoring and remembering the heroes of September 11th.

I would like to sincerely thank the Canadian Pacific Railway for having one of their beautifully decorated trains originate in New York City. This was a tribute to the men and women who lost their lives in the September 11th tragedy, as well as a tribute to their families. The victims' families were invited to the ceremony, and Christmas trees were given to all of the families of the firefighters and police officers who were killed. In addition, Canadian Pacific Railway donated \$100,000 to the NYSE Fund for Fallen Heroes. This kindness and generosity is just the most recent example of Canadian Pacific Railway's long standing commitment to the people of New York.

I commend the Canadian Pacific Railway on their benevolent gestures towards the city of New York, and thank them for not only supporting the United States and our families in this time of tragedy, but also for continuing their plight to feed the hungry.

IN HONOR OF MARY LOU WEISS UPON HER RETIREMENT FROM HERMOSA BEACH SCHOOL BOARD

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2001

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a good friend, Mary Lou Weiss, who retires this month from the Hermosa Beach Unified School District Board of Trustees, on which she has served as Trustee for 16 years, including 6 tours as President.

In her capacity as a School Board Trustee, Mary Lou has been a strong advocate for Hermosa Beach children, helping to ensure they receive the best educational opportunities. Because of her knowledge and expertise, I asked her to serve on my Education Advisory Committee.

A long time resident of Hermosa Beach, Mary Lou has contributed to the community in so many other ways as well. She has served as an advisory member for the Hermosa Beach Chamber of Commerce, coached AYSO boys soccer, and served on the advisory board for the Hermosa Beach Education